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The Army's EO Program and Policies



Lesson 6: Communications Process

Introduction

One of the most important leadership skills is the ability to communicate effectively.

Not only must you understand what you think you hear, you must understand what was actually said (and what is not said).

During this block of instruction, you will learn the importance of effective communication, and how it relates to you as a leader.



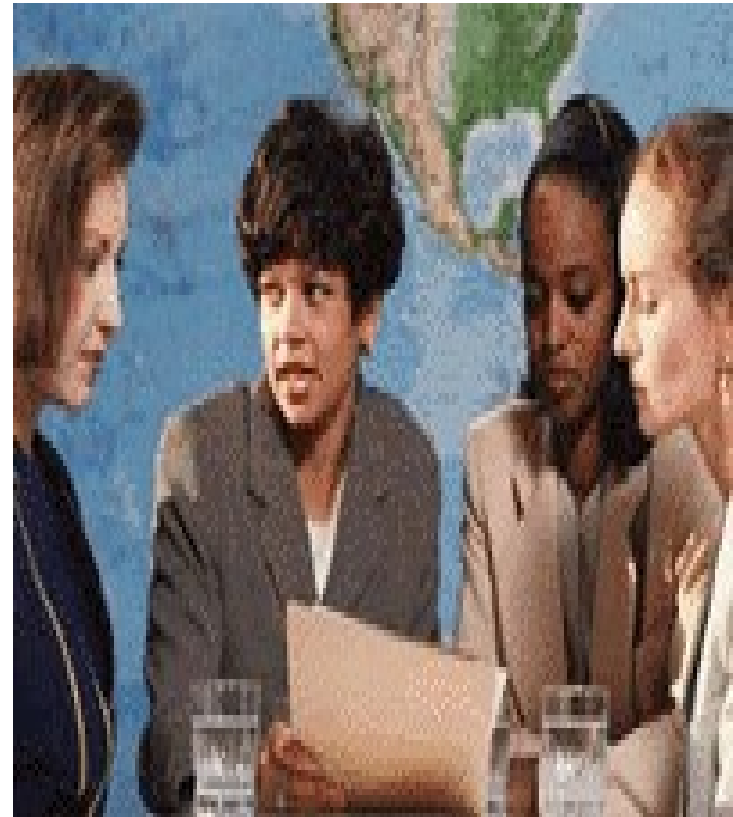
Overview

- Define Effective Communications
- Communications Styles
- Communications Barriers
- Cross-Cultural Misunderstandings
- Cross-Cultural Barriers



Communications

Communications is the successful exchange of information between individuals



Guidelines to Successful Communications

- Prepare Yourself
- Check Partner
- Be Positive
- Use “I” Messages
- Be Specific
- Active Listening
- Stay Focused



Factors of Interpersonal Communications

- **Self-Concept** - Is the most important factor. It reflects how we see ourselves.
- **Poor Self-Concept** - Equals poor communications. Negative feedback will also produce poor self-concept.
- **Coping with Angry Feelings** - Rising anxiety can block accurate hearing. When this occurs, accurate hearing is blocked, and the communication process is hindered. Therefore, if you receive any negative feedback, stay in touch with your anxiety level.



Factors of Interpersonal Communications

- **Admit your emotions** - Let the other person know what behavior is troublesome to you, so he/she knows what to change; it also avoids the heightened defensiveness that blame produces.
- An example may be: "PVT Smith, I see that you knocked over the bookcase as you walked by, and left it that way."
- **NOTE:** Express how you "feel" about it (not think). Tell the person how you feel about their behavior, your gut-level reaction, e.g., frightened, angry, nervous, frustrated, proud, happy, glad, or excited.



Factors of Interpersonal Communications

- **Self-disclosure** - Self-disclosure is a technique used to discover who we really are. Disclosure encourages disclosure; it involves speaking for self. The rewards for self-disclosure are:
 - (1) Increased self knowledge.
 - (2) Closer intimate relationship.
 - (3) Improve communication.
 - (4) Lightens guilt feelings.
 - (5) You can look at the situation objectively



Congruent/Incongruent Behaviors

- **Congruent Behavior.** Is the state of being consistent in character. It means that the behavior matches the word (talking the talk, walking the walk). Stated plainly, doing what you say you do.
- **Incongruent Behavior.** Behavior opposite of the word congruent behavior. In other words, (talking the talk and not walking the walk).



Discussion Question

If I tell you that the Army's Policy prohibits senior noncommissioned officers from dating subordinates in the same command, but I as a noncommissioned officer date my subordinates, what type of behavior am I exhibiting?

- ☐ Congruent behavior
- ☐ Incongruent behavior
- ☐ None



Elements of Communications Process

- **Source** - Individual with an idea.
- **Encode** - This source decides upon the symbol.
- **Message** - A signal
- **Decode** - The message translates the message into information that is meaningful.
- **Destination** - Receiver.
- **Feedback** - Is the verbal/nonverbal communication to a person or group providing information as to how their behavior is affecting or influencing you.



Styles of Communication

- Friendly, Sociable, or Playful
- Directive, Persuasive, Demanding, Evaluative, Blaming, or Praising
- Speculative, Tentative, Searching, Reflective, Uncertain, Exploring, or Intellectual
- Disclosing, Revealing, Explicit, Responsive, Accepting, and Aware



Styles of Communication

- Styles are how you talk about something.
- Different styles result from different intentions. The different ways we communicate truth and meaning are not universal and can cause a number of problems in a diverse organization.
- It is obvious that the Army consists of people who speak different languages from around the world, but even those who speak the same language may use that language in different ways.
- What leaders and their soldiers must understand is that being different does not mean being inferior.



Communication Styles

- There are four different styles of communication. These styles have dramatic changes in the message when styles are shifted. Effective communication involves matching your intention with your style.
- Four different styles of communication
 - Style I (friendly, sociable, or playful)
 - Style II (directive, persuasive, demanding, evaluative, blaming, or praising)
 - Style III (speculative, tentative, uncertain, searching, reflecting, exploring, or intellectual)
 - Style IV (disclosing, revealing, explicit, responsive, accepting, and aware)



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Communication Barriers

- Language Barriers
- Different Communication Styles
- Physical Barriers
- Perceptual Barriers
- Noise



Language Barriers



- Misunderstandings can occur when individuals speak different languages.
- Mistakes in translation or interpretation can be very costly to companies.



Different Communication Styles

- Even soldiers who speak the same language will have different ways of structuring information, presenting arguments, using different "styles" for social and professional exchanges, and making cultural distinctions and assumptions about how we interpret what others say.
- Communication is more than just an exchange of information.



Physical Barriers

- Hinders to Communication
 - Distance
 - Weather
 - Physical Health of an Individual
 - Diction
 - Enunciation



Perceptual Barriers

- Hinders to Communication
 - Distance
 - Weather
 - Physical Health of an Individual
 - Diction
 - Enunciation

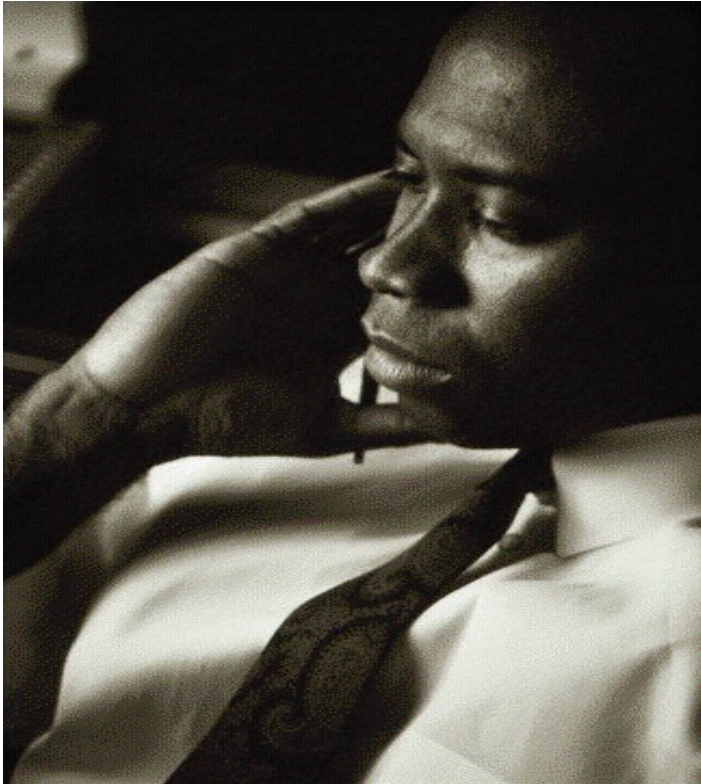


Cross-Cultural Misunderstandings

- Social Courtesies
- Flow of Information
- Assertiveness
- Culture
- Honesty



Cross-Cultural Misunderstanding



- **Most misunderstandings among soldiers result from cross-cultural experiences do not necessarily occur from only one episode of misunderstanding. It is usually a commutative process.**
- **Sometimes soldiers involved in a cross-cultural exchange will become emotionally hooked on one or two components and miss the meaning or purpose of the message.**



Social Courtesies

- Within our English language there are hidden codes and cues that control our conversations during business, social gatherings or in meetings.
- What have you heard said about people from the city, country, north, south, east or west?
- If you have not learned the social courtesies of a given culture you may feel rejected and frustrated in your efforts to communicate and get along with others. Because of this lack of understanding, you may not be evaluated fairly.



Flow of Information

- How soldiers arrange information depends on their cultural experiences.
- Many European cultures arrange information in a linear fashion, going directly from a starting point to a specific objective or conclusion.
- People from Arab, Latin, and Asian cultures may tend to communicate in a less linear fashion.
- They are more likely to branch off in a series of directions or go full circle before getting to what the listener may perceive as the point of the message.
- Culture also affects how and when business is discussed.



Assertiveness

- People from different cultures will have different distinctions about assertive behavior.
- Unlike many cultures, Americans perceive being assertive as a good management or strong leadership trait.
- However, unless properly trained, some individuals may have difficulty in distinguishing where assertiveness ends and aggressive behavior begins.



Honesty

- Americans believe that telling the truth is essential for real communications. "Honesty is the best policy," "tell it like it is," or "being up-front" is the message of straight talk.
- As you continue your Army career, truth and candor will be an integral part of your training and the Army ethic.
- Other cultures make different distinctions about how they define the truth or communicate real meaning. The need, or desire for honesty is not as valued as other traits such as courtesy, loyalty to family, sensitivity to a friend's feeling, or the need to "save face."



Barriers to Cross-Cultural Misunderstandings

- Songs, Symbols, and Gestures
- Accents
- Jive and Jargon
- Lack of Trust



Barriers to Cross-Cultural Misunderstandings

- Communication in the Army is the method by which soldiers exchange and disseminate information.
- It is also the foundation for all professional and personal relationships regardless of circumstances.
- A breakdown or barrier in communications can be very costly or even destructive for everyone involved.



Symbols

- Webster defines a symbol as "something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance;
- Ethnic, racial, or cultural symbolism may take the form of actions, sounds, or objects which are not important in themselves, but which direct attention to something that is considered important by the group.
- Most groups use symbols to show belonging and membership.



Symbols

- Group symbolism involve self-concepts within the groups. These concepts have often developed as a reaction to isolation from or rejection by the power establishment.
- They are expressed through a strong identity and solidarity and result in a increase in personal pride and public identity.
- A cultural symbol is an item or way of behaving which carries a special meaning for an ethnic or racial group.
- Knowledge of cultural symbols and their importance to individuals and group identity helps to create and maintain effective human relations and enhances unit cohesion.



Sign and Gestures

- Malcolm “X”
- Confederate Flag
- Handshakes
- Peace Sign
- Political Caricatures
- National Flags
- Clenched Fist



Accents

- Americans often react negatively when listening to people with strong foreign accents
- Indifferent when someone is struggling with the English language
- Can lead to other assumptions and bias



Jive and Jargon

- People who are culturally different from each other may make judgments based on the kind of expressions that each uses.
- These expressions can be derived from a soldier's culture or regional background.
- The problem and ultimate barrier to communication is that one is seen as illiterate while the other is thought to be colorful.



Lack of Trust

- Many people believe that trust is an essential ingredient to any communication process.
- Some minorities, including women, because of past negative experiences, are suspicious and have a great deal of anxiety toward those who are culturally different and have the power to control and shape their destiny.
- Their past experiences can make minorities feel they must confront and demand respect and fair treatment.
- Their different perceptions about how they will be treated can detract from real issues because of their reaction to the process.



Summary

- During this block of instructions you learned the importance of communication, both verbal and non-verbal.
- You have learned the definition, guidelines, factors, elements, various styles and barriers of communications.
- As a soldier, effective communication is critical. What you say, and how well you say it, will be a major factor in your leadership abilities.

